Roxbury, March 20, 1869.

My dear Wendell:

I am considerably in your debt in the matter of epistolary interchange; but let me thank you for not holding me to a strict account. Also, for the filial solicitude you express about committing myself to the Free Trade movement. // It is not my tendency to venture into deep water without knowing whether I can safely wade or swim through it; or, in other words, to commit myself, ignorantly and impulsively, to any new scheme, merely because it wears a reformatory aspect. With regard to business details and figures, I am very poorly posted; but I think I understand something of fundamental principles, and of the laws of political economy, and these have long since brought me to the side of free trade as against what is deceptively called the protective policy. Hence, when informed that I had been chosen a Vice President of the American Free Trade League,

MSA, I, V. 7, p. 958

I was not unwilling, to that extent at least, to show my approval of the object of the association. You say that you regard the League "as controlled by a set of monomaniacs." That used to be the opinion formed and expressed against the Anti-Slavery movement. If the League is seeking a righteous object, it will need a good deal of enthusiasm and special consecration on the part of those who have it in charge to give it efficiency. I was glad to see, therefore, at a meeting held under its auspices a few days since in New York, that something like thirty thousand dollars were subscribed for purposes of public enlightenment on the subject. Such zeal and liberality indicate something more than sincerity or consistency — a determination to press on, undismayed by any amount of public indifference or opposition. We are to have a kindred association formed here this week by some of our most intelligent and upright business men, and next week the first public meeting is to be held under its auspices. At that meeting

I have been strongly urged to bear my testimony, and have consented to, very briefly, with reference to those principles which include all possible details and contingencies. Such men as Edward Atkinson and William Endicott, Jr. will speak in regard to matters of trade and finance, and with these I shall not attempt to grapple. I know how exalted is your opinion of Mr. Godkin; but I think there must be many other sensible Free Traders in New York besides himself. Delmar is no doubt what you describe him to be, and must be got rid of. I believe he is not an officer of the League, and am told that he is employed pro tempore on account of his working powers. The League makes no party issue; and you may be sure that, so far as copperhead democracy is concerned, I understand all its wiles, and shall be certain to have no countenance given to it, per se, by the League. I again return you my thanks for your solicitude in regard to my adhesion to the cause, and for your hints concerning those who are managing it.

William arrived home from his New York excursion on Wednesday, having had a very pleasant time, especially at Auburn and Rochester. He is somewhat apprehensive that his wool purchases will not turn out as he hoped, on account of a change which took place in the market during his absence. He says he will write to you in a day or two. Mrs. Wright has been down with fever and sore throat, but is better. Ellie has also had a very severe cold and cough: she, too, and says she will shortly write to Lucy.
is improving. At home we are all doing well.

I enclose, for you and Lucy, a ferrotype copy of Fanny's daguerreotype portrait, taken when she was about three years old, thinking you will like to preserve it. Also, two photographs of myself in place of the two wretched ones you sent, some time ago, for my autograph. Pray, apologize for my delay to the owners of them, but assure them they are gainers by the exchange.

Your mother longs to see you, and Lucy, and Lloyd, and dear Mr. and Mrs. McKim; in which desire all the rest of us strongly concur. We send our united loving remembrances to George.

Your affectionate Father.

M.A.H.L. V.7, P.95B